



owner based in Manhattan. MELICHAREK and others collected the money from the victim due to their organized crime status, and by making threats of violence against the victim and his family.

MELICHAREK faces a maximum sentence of life in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for September 4, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. before Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN.

MELICHAREK's guilty plea is the fifth in this case to date, including: DOMINICK MEMOLI, a/k/a "Shakes," and DARDIAN CELAJ, a/k/a "Danny," to robbery and firearms offenses; LOUIS PIPOLO to a robbery charge; and MICHAEL IUNI to an extortion charge. All these defendants await sentencing. The remaining defendants, ENED GJELAJ, a/k/a "Neddy," and ANGELO NICOSIA, are scheduled for trial before United States District Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN in July 2008. As to them, the charges are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Mr. GARCIA praised the work of the Newark Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), and the assistance of the FBI New York Field Office; the Orange County, New York District Attorney's Office; the Westchester County, New York District Attorney's Office; the New York State Police; the Morris County, New Jersey Prosecutor's Office; the Rockaway Township, New Jersey Police Department; and the New Jersey State Commission of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorneys ELIE HONIG and LISA ZORNBERG are in charge of the prosecution.

08-153

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